

Wallace, A. H.

The birds of paradise.

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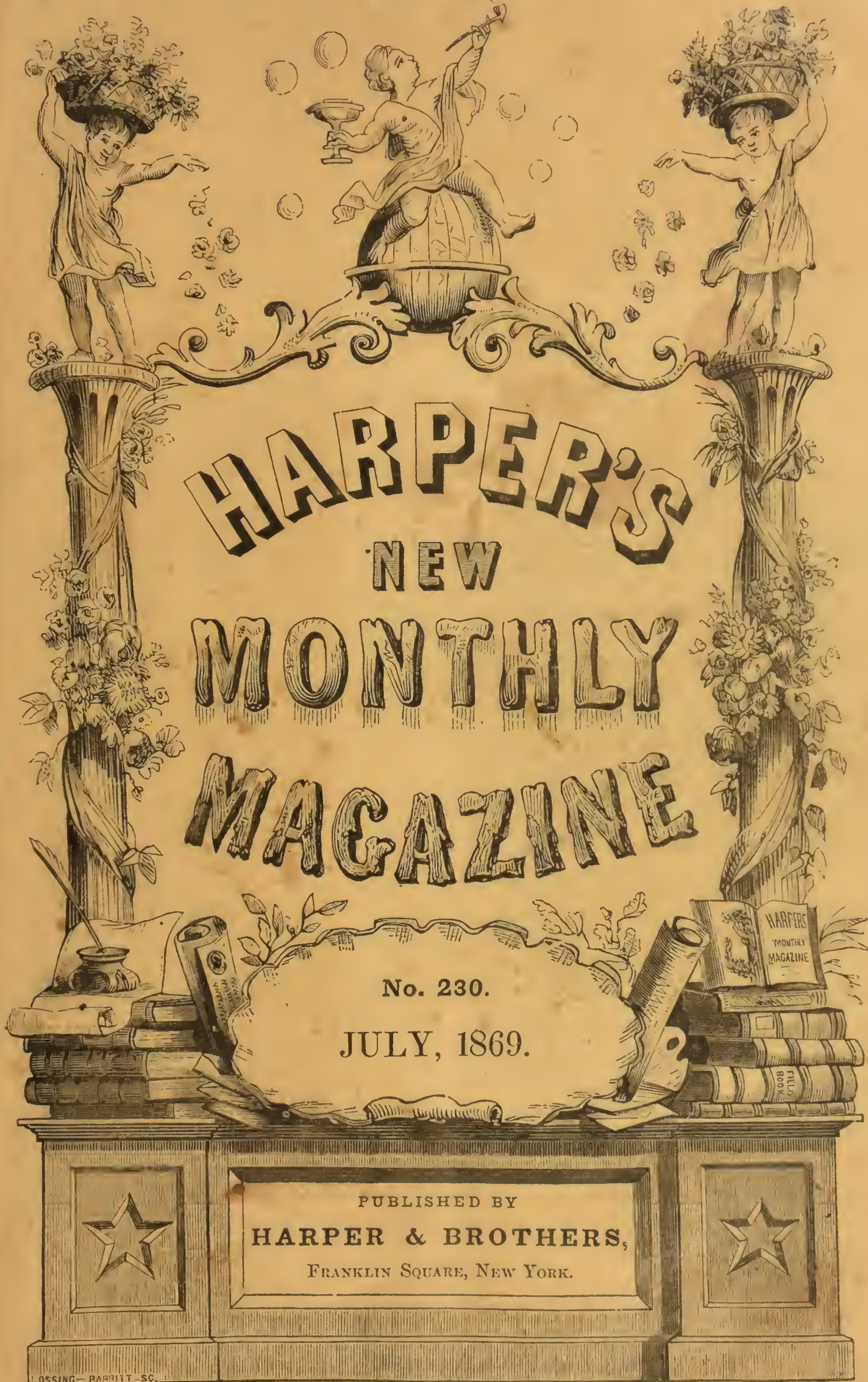
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By A. R. Wallace.



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THE BIRDS OF PARADISE.*



NATIVES OF ARU SHOOTING THE GREAT BIRD OF PARADISE.

AS many of my journeys were made with the express object of obtaining specimens of the Birds of Paradise, and learning something of their habits and distribution; and being (as far as I am aware) the only Englishman who has seen these wonderful birds in their native forests, and obtained specimens of many of them, I propose to give here, in a connected

form, the result of my observations and inquiries.

When the earliest European voyagers reached the Moluccas in search of cloves and nutmegs, which were then rare and precious spices, they were presented with the dried skins of birds so strange and beautiful as to excite the admiration even of those wealth-seeking rovers. The Malay traders gave them the name of "Manuk dewata," or God's Birds; and the Portuguese, finding that the skins had no feet or wings, and not being able to learn any thing

* A chapter from *The Malay Archipelago: the Land of the Orang-Utan, and the Bird of Paradise*. By ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE. With Maps and numerous Illustrations. Published by Harper and Brothers.

authentic about them, called the birds "Passaros de Sol," or Birds of the Sun; while the learned Dutchmen, who wrote in Latin, called them "Avis paradisæus;" or Paradise Bird. John van Linschoten gives these names in 1598, and tells us that no one has seen these birds alive, for they live in the air, always turning toward the sun, and never lighting on the earth till they die; for they have neither feet nor wings, as, he adds, may be seen by the birds carried to India, and sometimes to Holland, but being very costly they were then rarely seen in Europe.

More than a hundred years later Mr. William Funnell, who accompanied Dampier, and wrote an account of the voyage, saw specimens at Amboyna, and was told that they came to Banda to eat nutmegs, which intoxicated them and made them fall down senseless, when they were killed by ants. Down to 1760, when Linnaeus named the largest species, *Paradisea apoda* (the Footless Paradise Bird), no perfect specimen had been seen in Europe, and absolutely nothing was known about them. And even now, a hundred years later, most books state that they migrate annually to Ternate, Banda, and Amboyna; whereas the fact is, that they are as completely unknown in those islands in a wild state as they are in England. Linnaeus was also acquainted with a small species, which he named *Paradisea regia* (the King Bird of Paradise), and since then nine or ten others have been named, all of which were first described from skins preserved by the savages of New Guinea, and generally more or less imperfect. These are now all known in the Malay Archipelago as "Burong mati," or Dead Birds, indicating that the Malay traders never saw them alive.

The *Paradiseidae* are a group of moderate-sized birds, allied in their structure and habits to crows, starlings, and to the Australian honeyeaters; but they are characterized by extraordinary developments of plumage, which are unequalled in any other family of birds. In several species large tufts of delicate bright-colored feathers spring from each side of the body beneath the wings, forming trains, or fans, or shields; and the middle feathers of the tail are often elongated into wires, twisted into fantastic shapes, or adorned with the most brilliant metallic tints. In another set of species these accessory plumes spring from the head, the back, or the shoulders; while the intensity of color and of metallic lustre displayed by their plumage is not to be equaled by any other birds, except, perhaps, the humming-birds, and is not surpassed even by these. They have been usually classified under two distinct families, *Paradiseidae* and *Epimachidae*, the latter characterized by long and slender beaks, and supposed to be allied to the hoopoes; but the two groups are so closely allied in every essential point of structure and habits, that I shall consider them as forming subdivisions of one family. I will now give a short description of each of the

known species, and then add some general remarks on their natural history.

The GREAT BIRD OF PARADISE (*Paradisea apoda* of Linnaeus) is the largest species known, being generally seventeen or eighteen inches from the beak to the tip of the tail. The body, wings, and tail are of a rich coffee-brown, which deepens on the breast to a blackish-violet or purple-brown. The whole top of the head and neck is of an exceedingly delicate straw-yellow, the feathers being short and close set, so as to resemble plush or velvet; the lower part of the throat up to the eye is clothed with scaly feathers of an emerald-green color, and with a rich metallic gloss, and velvety plumes of a still deeper green extend in a band across the forehead and chin as far as the eye, which is bright yellow. The beak is pale lead-blue; and the feet, which are rather large and very strong and well formed, are of a pale ashy-pink. The two middle feathers of the tail have no webs, except a very small one at the base and at the extreme tip, forming wire-like cirrhi, which spread out in an elegant double curve, and vary from twenty-four to thirty-four inches long. From each side of the body, beneath the wings, springs a dense tuft of long and delicate plumes, sometimes two feet in length, of the most intense golden-orange color and very glossy, but changing toward the tips into a pale brown. This tuft of plumage can be elevated and spread out at pleasure, so as almost to conceal the body of the bird.

These splendid ornaments are entirely confined to the male sex, while the female is really a very plain and ordinary-looking bird of a uniform coffee-brown color which never changes, neither does she possess the long tail wires, nor a single yellow or green feather about the head. The young males of the first year exactly resemble the females, so that they can only be distinguished by dissection. The first change is the acquisition of the yellow and green color on the head and throat, and at the same time the two middle tail feathers grow a few inches longer than the rest, but remain webbed on both sides. At a later period these feathers are replaced by the long bare shafts of the full length, as in the adult bird; but there is still no sign of the magnificent orange side plumes, which later still complete the attire of the perfect male. To effect these changes there must be at least three successive moultings; and as the birds were found by me in all the stages about the same time, it is probable that they moult only once a year, and that the full plumage is not acquired till the bird is four years old. It was long thought that the fine train of feathers was assumed for a short time only at the breeding season, but my own experience, as well as the observation of birds of an allied species which I brought home with me, and which lived two years, show that the complete plumage is retained during the whole year, except during a short period of moulting as with most other birds.

The Great Bird of Paradise is very active and vigorous, and seems to be in constant motion all day long. It is very abundant, small flocks of females and young males being constantly met with; and though the full-plumaged birds are less plentiful, their loud cries, which are heard daily, show that they also are very numerous. Their note is, "Wawk-wawk-wawk—Wök, wök-wök," and is so loud and shrill as to be heard a great distance, and to form the most prominent and characteristic animal sound in the Aru Islands. The mode of nidification is unknown; but the natives told me that the nest was formed of leaves placed on an ant's nest, or on some projecting limb of a very lofty tree, and they believe that it contains only one young bird. The egg is quite unknown, and the natives declared they had never seen it; and a very high reward offered for one by a Dutch official did not meet with success.

They moult about January or February, and in May, when they are in full plumage, the males assemble early in the morning to exhibit themselves in the singular manner which the natives call their "Sáceleli," or dancing-parties, in certain trees in the forest, which are not fruit trees as I at first imagined, but which have an immense head of spreading branches and large but scattered leaves, giving a clear space for the birds to play and exhibit their plumes. On one of these trees a dozen or twenty full-plumaged male birds assemble together, raise up their wings, stretch out their necks, and elevate their exquisite plumes, keeping them in a continual vibration. Between whiles they fly across from branch to branch in great excitement, so that the whole tree is filled with waving plumes in every variety of attitude and motion. The bird itself is nearly as large as a crow, and is of a rich coffee-brown color. The head and neck is of a pure straw-yellow above, and rich metallic green beneath. The long plummy tufts of golden-orange feathers spring from the sides beneath each wing, and when the bird is in repose are partly concealed by them. At the time of its excitement, however, the wings are raised vertically over the back, the head is bent down and stretched out, and the long plumes are raised up and expanded till they form two magnificent golden fans, striped with deep red at the base, and fading off into the pale brown tint of the finely divided and softly waving points. The whole bird is then overshadowed by them, the crouching body, yellow head, and emerald-green throat forming but the foundation and setting to the golden glory which waves above. When seen in this attitude the Bird of Paradise really deserves its name, and must be ranked as one of the most beautiful and most wonderful of living things.

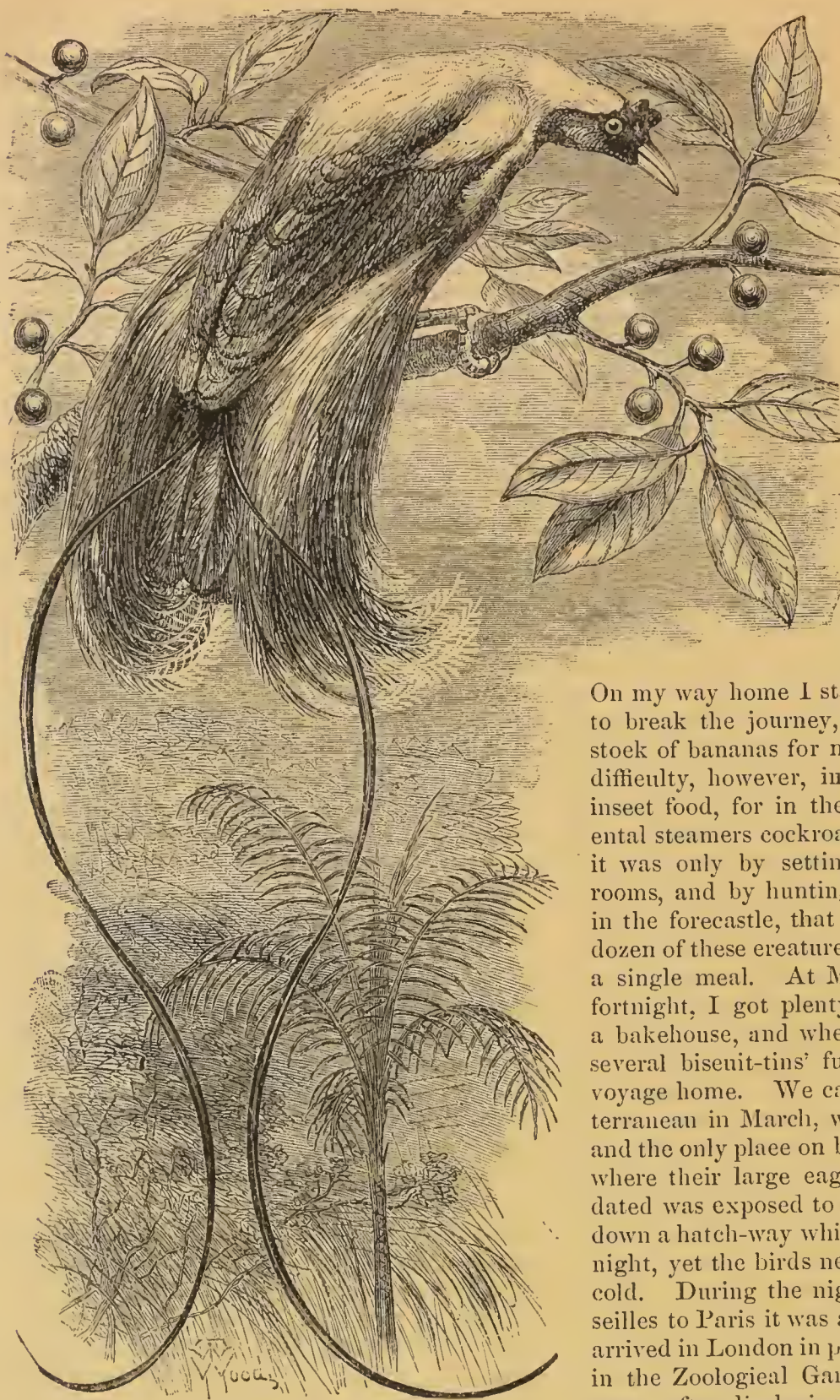
This habit enables the natives to obtain specimens with comparative ease. As soon as they find that the birds have fixed upon a tree on which to assemble, they build a little shelter of palm leaves in a convenient place among the branches, and the hunter ensconces himself in

it before daylight, armed with his bow and a number of arrows terminating in a round knob. A boy waits at the foot of the tree, and when the birds come at sunrise, and a sufficient number have assembled, and have begun to dance, the hunter shoots with his blunt arrow so strongly as to stun the bird, which drops down, and is secured and killed by the boy without its plumage being injured by a drop of blood. The rest take no notice, and fall one after another till some of them take the alarm.

The native mode of preserving them is to cut off the wings and feet, and then skin the body up to the beak, taking out the skull. A stout stick is then run up through the specimen, coming out at the mouth. Round this some leaves are stuffed, and the whole is wrapped up in a palm spathe and dried in the smoky hut. By this plan the head, which is really large, is shrunk up almost to nothing, the body is much reduced and shortened, and the greatest prominence is given to the flowing plumage. Some of these native skins are very clean, and often have wings and feet left on; others are dreadfully stained with smoke, and all give a most erroneous idea of the proportions of the living bird.

The *Paradisea apoda*, as far as we have any certain knowledge, is confined to the main land of the Aru Islands, never being found in the smaller islands which surround the central mass. It is certainly not found in any of the parts of New Guinea visited by the Malay and Bugis traders, nor in any of the other islands where Birds of Paradise are obtained. But this is by no means conclusive evidence, for it is only in certain localities that the natives prepare skins, and in other places the same birds may be abundant without ever becoming known. It is therefore quite possible that this species may inhabit the great southern mass of New Guinea, from which Aru has been separated; while its near ally, which I shall next describe, is confined to the northwestern peninsula.

The LESSER BIRD OF PARADISE (*Paradisea papuana* of Bechstein, "Le petit Émeraude" of French authors) is a much smaller bird than the preceding, although very similar to it. It differs in its lighter brown color, not becoming darker or purplered on the breast; in the extension of the yellow color all over the upper part of the back and on the wing coverts; in the lighter yellow of the side plumes, which have only a tinge of orange, and at the tips are nearly pure white; and in the comparative shortness of the tail cirrhi. The female differs remarkably from the same sex in *Paradisea apoda* by being entirely white on the under surface of the body, and is thus a much handsomer bird. The young males are similarly colored, and as they grow older they change to brown, and go through the same stages in acquiring the perfect plumage as has already been described in the allied species. It is this bird which is most commonly used in ladies' head-dresses in this country, and also forms an important article of commerce in the East.



THE RED BIRD OF PARADISE.

The *Paradisaea papuana* has a comparatively wide range, being the common species on the main land of New Guinea, as well as on the islands of Mysol, Salwatty, Jobie, Biak, and Sook. On the south coast of New Guinea the Dutch naturalist, Muller, found it at the Oetanata River in longitude 136° east. I obtained it myself at Dorey; and the captain of the Dutch steamer *Etna* informed me that he had seen the feathers among the natives of Humboldt Bay, in 141° east longitude. It is very probable, therefore, that it ranges over the whole of the main land of New Guinea.

The true Paradise Birds are omnivorous, feeding on fruits and insects—of the former

preferring the small figs; of the latter, grasshoppers, locusts, and phasmas, as well as cockroaches and caterpillars. When I returned home, in 1862, I was so fortunate as to find two adult males of this species in Singapore; and as they seemed healthy, and fed voraciously on rice, bananas, and cockroaches, I determined on giving the very high price asked for them—£100—and to bring them to England by the overland route under my own care.

On my way home I staid a week at Bombay to break the journey, and to lay in a fresh stock of bananas for my birds. I had great difficulty, however, in supplying them with insect food, for in the Peninsular and Oriental steamers cockroaches were scarce, and it was only by setting traps in the store-rooms, and by hunting an hour every night in the fore-castle, that I could secure a few dozen of these creatures—scarcely enough for a single meal. At Malta, where I staid a fortnight, I got plenty of cockroaches from a bakehouse, and when I left took with me several biscuit-tins full as provision for the voyage home. We came through the Mediterranean in March, with a very cold wind; and the only place on board the mail-steamer where their large cage could be accommodated was exposed to a strong current of air down a hatch-way which stood open day and night, yet the birds never seemed to feel the cold. During the night journey from Marseilles to Paris it was a sharp frost; yet they arrived in London in perfect health, and lived in the Zoological Gardens for one and two years, often displaying their beautiful plumes to the admiration of the spectators. It is

evident, therefore, that the Paradise Birds are very hardy, and require air and exercise rather than heat; and I feel sure that if a good-sized conservatory could be devoted to them, or if they could be turned loose in the tropical department of the Crystal Palace or the Great Palm House at Kew, they would live for many years.

The RED BIRD OF PARADISE (*Paradisaea rubra* of Vieillot), though allied to the two birds already described, is much more distinct from them than they are from each other. It is about the same size as *Paradisaea papuana* (13 to 14 inches long), but differs from it in many particulars. The side plumes, instead of

being yellow, are rich crimson, and only extend about three or four inches beyond the end of the tail; they are somewhat rigid, and the ends are curved downward and inward, and are tipped with white. The two middle tail feathers, instead of being simply elongated and deprived of their webs, are transformed into stiff black ribbons a quarter of an inch wide, but curved like a split quill, and resembling thin half cylinders of horn or whalebone. When a dead bird is laid on its back it is seen that these ribbons take a curve or set, which brings them round so as to meet in a double circle on the neck of the bird; but when they hang downward, during life, they assume a spiral twist, and form an exceedingly graceful double curve. They are about twenty-two inches long, and always attract attention as the most conspicuous and extraordinary feature of the species. The rich metallic green color of the throat extends over the front half of the head to behind the eyes, and on the forehead forms a little double crest of scaly feathers, which adds much to the vivacity of the bird's aspect. The bill is gamboge-yellow, and the iris blackish-olive.

The female of this species is of a tolerably uniform coffee-brown color, but has a blackish head, and the nape, neck, and shoulders yellow, indicating the position of the brighter colors of the male. The changes of plumage follow the same order of succession as in the other species, the bright colors of the head and neck being first developed, then the lengthened filaments of the tail, and last of all, the red side plumes. I obtained a series of specimens, illustrating the manner in which the extraordinary black tail ribbons are developed, which is very remarkable. They first appear as two ordinary feathers, rather shorter than the rest of the tail; the second stage would no doubt be that shown in a specimen of *Paradisæa apoda*, in which the feathers are moderately lengthened, and with the web narrowed in the middle; the third stage is shown by a specimen which has part of the midrib bare, and terminated by a spatulate web; in another the bare midrib is a little dilated and semi-cylindrical, and the terminal web very small; in a fifth the perfect black horny ribbon is formed, but it bears at its extremity a brown spatulate web; while in another a portion of the black ribbon itself bears, for a portion of its length, a narrow brown web. It is only after these changes are fully completed that the red side plumes begin to appear.

The Red Birds of Paradise are not shot with blunt arrows, as in the Arn Islands and some parts of New Guinea, but are snared in a very ingenious manner. A large climbing Arum bears a red reticulated fruit, of which the birds are very fond. The hunters fasten this fruit on a stout forked stick, and provide themselves with a fine but strong cord. They then seek out some tree in the forest on which these birds are accustomed to perch, and climbing up it fasten the stick to a branch, and arrange the cord

in a noose so ingeniously that when the bird comes to eat the fruit its legs are caught, and by pulling the end of the cord, which hangs down to the ground, it comes free from the branch and brings down the bird. Sometimes, when food is abundant elsewhere, the hunter sits from morning till night under his tree, with the cord in his hand, and even for two or three whole days in succession, without even getting a bite; while, on the other hand, if very lucky, he may get two or three birds in a day. There are only eight or ten men who practice this art.

Some few were brought me the same day they were caught, and I had an opportunity of examining them in all their beauty and vivacity. As soon as I found they were generally brought alive, I set one of my men to make a large bamboo cage with troughs for food and water, hoping to be able to keep some of them. I got the natives to bring me branches of a fruit they were very fond of, and I was pleased to find they ate it greedily, and would also take any number of live grasshoppers I gave them, stripping off the legs and wings, and then swallowing them. They drank plenty of water, and were in constant motion, jumping about the cage from perch to perch, clinging on the top and sides, and rarely resting a moment the first day till nightfall. The second day they were always less active, although they would eat as freely as before; and on the morning of the third day they were almost always found dead at the bottom of the cage, without any apparent cause. Some of them ate boiled rice as well as fruit and insects; but after trying many in succession, not one out of ten lived more than three days. The second or third day they would be dull, and in several cases they were seized with convulsions, and fell off the perch, dying a few hours afterward. I tried immature as well as full-plumaged birds, but with no better success, and at length gave it up as a hopeless task, and confined my attention to preserving specimens in as good a condition as possible.

The Red Bird of Paradise offers a remarkable case of restricted range, being entirely confined to the small island of Waigion, off the northwest extremity of New Guinea, where it replaces the allied species found in the other islands.

The three birds just described form a well-marked group, agreeing in every point of general structure, in their comparatively large size, the brown color of their bodies, wings, and tail, and in the peculiar character of the ornamental plumage which distinguishes the male bird. The group ranges nearly over the whole area inhabited by the family of the *Paradisæide*; but each of the species has its own limited region, and is never found in the same district with either of its close allies. To these three birds properly belongs the generic title *Paradisæa*, or true Paradise Bird.

The next species is the *Paradisæa regia* of Linnæus, or KING BIRD OF PARADISE, which differs so much from the three preceding spe-



THE KING AND TWELVE-WIRED BIRD OF PARADISE.

cies as to deserve a distinct generic name, and it has accordingly been called *Cicinnurus regius*. By the Malays it is called "Burong rajah," or King Bird, and by the natives of the Aru Islands "Goby-goby."

This lovely little bird is only about six and a half inches long, partly owing to the very short tail, which does not surpass the somewhat square wings. The head, throat, and entire upper surface are of the richest glossy crimson-red, shading to orange-crimson on the forehead, where the feathers extend beyond the nostrils more than half-way down the beak. The plumage is excessively brilliant, shining in certain lights with a metallic or glassy lustre. The breast and belly are pure silky white, between which color and the red of the throat

there is a broad band of rich metallic green, and there is a small spot of the same color close above each eye. From each side of the body, beneath the wing, springs a tuft of broad delicate feathers about an inch and a half long, of an ashy color, but tipped with a broad band of emerald-green, bordered within by a narrow line of buff. These plumes are concealed beneath the wing, but when the bird pleases, can be raised and spread out so as to form an elegant semicircular fan on each shoulder. But another ornament still more extraordinary, and if possible more beautiful, adorns this little bird. The two middle tail feathers are modified into very slender wire-like shafts, nearly six inches long, each of which bears at the extremity, on the inner side only, a web of an emerald-green

color, which is coiled up into a perfect spiral disk, and produces a most singular and charming effect. The bill is orange-yellow, and the feet and legs of a fine cobalt-blue.

The female of this little gem is such a plainly colored bird that it can at first sight hardly be believed to belong to the same species. The upper surface is of a dull earthy-brown, a slight tinge of orange-red appearing only on the margins of the quills. Beneath it is of a paler yellowish-brown, scaled and banded with narrow dusky markings. The young males are exactly like the female, and they no doubt undergo a series of changes as singular as those of *Paradisea rubra*; but, unfortunately, I was unable to obtain illustrative specimens.

This exquisite little creature frequents the smaller trees in the thickest parts of the forest, feeding on various fruits, often of a very large size for so small a bird. It is very active both on its wings and feet, and makes a whirring sound while flying, something like the South American manakins. It often flutters its wings and displays the beautiful fan which adorns its breast, while the star-bearing tail wires diverge in an elegant double curve. It is tolerably plentiful in the Arn Islands, which led to its being brought to Europe at an early period along with *Paradisea apoda*. It also occurs in the island of Mysol, and in every part of New Guinea which has been visited by naturalists.

We now come to the remarkable little bird called the MAGNIFICENT, first figured by Buffon, and named *Paradisea speciosa* by Boddaert, which, with one allied species, has been formed into a separate genus by Prince Bonaparte, under the name of *Diphyllodes*, from the curious double mantle which clothes the back.

The head is covered with short brown velvety feathers, which advance on the beak so as to cover the nostrils. From the nape springs a dense mass of feathers of a straw-yellow color, and about one and a half inches long, forming a mantle over the upper part of the back. Beneath this, and forming a band about one-third of an inch beyond it, is a second mantle of rich, glossy, reddish-brown feathers. The rest of the back is orange-brown, the tail coverts and tail dark bronzy, the wings light orange-buff. The whole under surface is covered with an abundance of plumage springing from the margins of the breast, and of a rich deep green color, with changeable hues of purple. Down the middle of the breast is a broad band of scaly plumes of the same color, while the chin and throat are of a rich metallic bronze. From the middle of the tail spring two narrow feathers of a rich steel-blue, and about ten inches long. These are webbed on the inner side

only, and curve outward, so as to form a double circle.

From what we know of the habits of allied species we may be sure that the greatly developed plumage of this bird is erected and displayed in some remarkable manner. The mass of feathers on the under surface are probably expanded into a hemisphere, while the beautiful yellow mantle is no doubt elevated so as to give the bird a very different appearance from that which it presents in the dried and flattened skins of the natives, through which alone it is at present known. The feet appear to be dark blue. This rare and elegant little bird is found only on the main land of New Guinea, and in the island of Mysol.

A still more rare and beautiful species than the last is the *Diphyllodes Wilsoni*, described by Mr. Cassin from a native skin in the rich museum of Philadelphia. The same bird was afterward named *Diphyllodes respublica* by Prince Bonaparte, and still later *Schlegelia calva* by Dr. Bernstein, who was so fortunate as to obtain fresh specimens in Waigiu.

In this species the upper mantle is sulphur-yellow, the lower one and the wings pure red, the breast plumes dark green, and the lengthened middle tail feathers much shorter than in the allied species. The most curious difference is, however, that the top of the head is bald, the bare skin being of a rich cobalt-blue, crossed by several lines of black velvety feathers.

It is about the same size as *Diphyllodes speciosa*, and is no doubt entirely confined to the island of Waigiu. The female, as figured and described by Dr. Bernstein, is very like that of *Cicinnurus regius*, being similarly banded beneath; and we may therefore conclude that its near ally, the "Magnificent," is at least equally plain in this sex, of which specimens have not yet been obtained.

The SUPERB BIRD OF PARADISE was first figured by Buffon, and was named by Boddaert *Paradisea atra*, from the black ground color of its plumage. It forms the genus *Lophorina* of



THE MAGNIFICENT BIRD OF PARADISE.

Viellot, and is one of the rarest and most brilliant of the whole group, being only known from mutilated native skins. This bird is a little larger than the "Magnificent." The ground color of the plumage is intense black, but with beautiful bronze reflections on the neck, and the whole head scaled with feathers of brilliant metallic green and blue. Over its breast it bears a shield formed of narrow and rather stiff feathers, much elongated toward the sides, of a pure bluish-green color, and with a satiny gloss. But a still more extraordinary ornament is that which springs from the back of the neck—a shield of a similar form to that on the breast, but much larger, and of a velvety black color, glossed with bronze and purple. The outermost feathers of this shield are half an inch longer than the wing, and when it is elevated it must, in conjunction with the breast shield, completely change the form and whole appearance of the bird. The bill is black, and the feet appear to be yellow.

This wonderful little bird inhabits the interior of the northern peninsula of New Guinea only. Neither I nor Mr. Allen could hear any thing of it in any of the islands or on any part of the coast. It is true that it was obtained from the coast natives by Lesson; but when at Sorong in 1861 Mr. Allen learned that it is only found three days' journey in the interior. Owing to these "Black Birds of Paradise," as they are called, not being so much valued as articles of merchandise, they now seem to be rarely preserved by the natives; and it thus happened that, during several years spent on the coasts of New Guinea and in the Moluccas, I was never able to obtain a skin. We are therefore quite ignorant of the habits of this bird, and also of its female, though the latter is no doubt as plain and inconspicuous as in all the other species of this family.



THE SIX-SHAFTED BIRD OF PARADISE.



THE SUPERB BIRD OF PARADISE.

The GOLDEN, or SIX-SHAFTED PARADISE BIRD is another rare species, first figured by Buffon, and never yet obtained in perfect condition. It was named by Boddaert *Paradisea searpennis*, and forms the genus *Parotia* of Viellot. This wonderful bird is about the size of the female *Paradisea rubra*. The plumage appears at first sight black, but it glows in certain lights with bronze and deep purple. The throat and breast are scaled with broad flat feathers of an intense golden hue, changing to green and blue tints in certain lights. On the back of the head is a broad recurved band of feathers, whose brilliancy is indescribable, resembling the sheen of emerald and topaz rather than any organic substance. Over the forehead is a large patch of pure white feathers, which shine like satin; and from the sides of the head spring the six wonderful feathers from which the bird receives its name. These are slender wires, six inches long, with a small oval web at the extremity. In addition to these ornaments there is also an immense tuft of soft feathers on each side of the breast, which when elevated must entirely hide the wings, and give the bird an appearance of being double its real bulk. The bill is black, short, and rather compressed, with the feathers advancing over the nostrils, as in *Cicimurus regius*. This singular and brilliant bird inhabits the same region as the "Superb Bird of Paradise;" and nothing whatever is known about it but what we can derive from an examination of the skins preserved by the natives of New Guinea.

The STANDARD WING, named *Semioptera Wallacei* by Mr. G. R. Gray, is an entirely new form of Bird of Paradise, discovered by myself in the island of Batchian, and especially distinguished by a pair of long narrow feathers of a white color, which spring from among the short plumes which clothe the bend of the wing, and are capable of being erected at pleasure. The general color of this bird is a delicate olive-brown, deepening to a kind of bronzy-olive in the middle of the back, and changing to a del-



WALLACE'S STANDARD WING, MALE AND FEMALE.

icate ashy-violet with a metallic gloss on the crown of the head. The feathers, which cover the nostrils and extend half-way down the beak, are loose and curved upward. Beneath it is much more beautiful. The scale-like feathers of the breast are margined with rich metallic blue-green, which color entirely covers the throat and sides of the neck, as well as the long pointed plumes which spring from the sides of the breast, and extend nearly as far as the end of the wings. The most curious feature of the bird, however, and one altogether unique in the whole class, is found in the pair of long narrow delicate feathers which spring from each wing close to the bend. On lifting the wing coverts they are seen to arise from two tubular horny sheaths, which diverge from near the point of junction of the carpal bones. They are erectile,

and when the bird is excited are spread out at right angles to the wing and slightly divergent. They are from six to six and a half inches long, the upper one slightly exceeding the lower. The total length of the bird is eleven inches. The bill is horny-olive, the iris deep olive, and the feet bright orange.

The female bird is remarkably plain, being entirely of a dull pale earthy-brown, with only a slight tinge of ashy-violet on the head to relieve its general monotony; and the young males exactly resemble her.

This bird frequents the lower trees of the forests, and, like most Paradise-Birds, is in constant motion—flying from branch to branch, clinging to the twigs and even to the smooth and vertical trunks almost as easily as a woodpecker. It continually utters a harsh, creaking

note, somewhat intermediate between that of *Paradisæa apoda* and the more musical cry of *Cicinnurus regius*. The males at short intervals open and flutter their wings, erect the long shoulder feathers, and spread out the elegant green breast shields.

The "Standard Wing" is found in Gilolo as well as in Batchian, and all the specimens from the former island have the green breast shield rather longer, the crown of the head darker violet, and the lower parts of the body rather more strongly scaled with green. This is the only Paradise Bird yet found in the Moluccan district, all the others being confined to the Papuan Islands and North Australia.

We now come to the *Epimachide*, or "Long-billed Birds of Paradise," which, as before stated, ought not to be separated from the *Paradisæide* by the intervention of any other birds. One of the most remarkable of these is the "Twelve-wired Paradise Bird," *Paradisæa alba* of Blumenbach, but now placed in the genus *Seleucides* of Lesson.

This bird is about twelve inches long, of which the compressed and curved beak occupies two inches. The color of the breast and upper surface appears at first sight nearly black, but a close examination shows that no part of it is devoid of color, and by holding it in various lights the most rich and glowing tints become visible. The head, covered with short velvety feathers, which advance on the chin much further than on the upper part of the beak, is of a purplish-bronze color; the whole of the back and shoulders is rich bronzy-green, while the closed wings and tail are of the most brilliant violet-purple, all the plumage having a delicate silky gloss. The mass of feathers which cover the breast is really almost black, with faint glosses of green and purple, but their outer edges are margined with glittering bands of emerald-green. The whole lower part of the body is rich buffy-yellow, including the tuft of plumes which spring from the sides, and extend an inch and a half beyond the tail. When skins are exposed to the light the yellow fades into dull white, from which circumstance it derived its specific name. About six of the innermost of these plumes on each side have the midrib elongated into slender black wires, which bend at right angles, and curve somewhat backward to a length of about ten inches, forming one of those extraordinary and fantastic ornaments with which this group of birds abounds. The bill is jet black, and the feet bright yellow.

The female, although not quite so plain a bird as in some other species, presents none of the gay colors or ornamental plumage of the male. The top of the head and back of the neck are black, the rest of the upper parts rich reddish-brown; while the under surface is entirely yellowish-ashy, somewhat blackish on the breast, and crossed throughout with narrow blackish wavy bands.

The *Seleucides alba* is found in the island of Salvatty, and in the northwestern parts of New

Guinea, where it frequents flowering trees, especially sago-palms and pandani, sucking the flowers, round and beneath which its unusually large and powerful feet enable it to cling. Its motions are very rapid. It seldom rests more than a few moments on one tree, after which it flies straight off, and with great swiftness, to another. It has a loud shrill cry, to be heard a long way, consisting of "Cáh, cáh," repeated five or six times in a descending scale, and at the last note it generally flies away. The males are quite solitary in their habits, although, perhaps, they assemble at certain times like the true Paradise Birds. All the specimens shot and opened by my assistant Mr. Allen, who obtained this fine bird during his last voyage to New Guinea, had nothing in their stomachs but a brown sweet liquid, probably the nectar of the flowers on which they had been feeding. They certainly, however, eat both fruit and insects, for a specimen which I saw alive on board a Dutch steamer ate cockroaches and papaya fruit voraciously. This bird had the curious habit of resting at noon with the bill pointing vertically upward. It died on the passage to Batavia, and I secured the body and formed a skeleton, which shows indisputably that it is really a Bird of Paradise. The tongue is very long and extensible, but flat and a little fibrous at the end, exactly like the true *Paradisæas*.

In the island of Salvatty the natives search in the forests till they find the sleeping place of this bird, which they know by seeing its dung upon the ground. It is generally in a low bushy tree. At night they climb up the tree, and either shoot the birds with blunt arrows, or even catch them alive with a cloth. In New Guinea they are caught by placing snares on the trees frequented by them, in the same way as the Red Paradise Birds are caught in Wai-gion, and which has already been described.

The great "Epimaque," or LONG-TAILED



THE LONG-TAILED BIRD OF PARADISE.

PARADISE BIRD (*Epimachus magnus*), is another of these wonderful creatures, only known by the imperfect skins pre-

pared by the natives. In its dark velvety plumage, glossed with bronze and purple, it resembles the *Seleucidés alba*, but it bears a magnificent tail more than two feet long, glossed on the upper surface with the most intense opalescent blue. Its chief ornament, however, consists in the group of broad plumes which spring from the sides of the breast, and which are dilated at the extremity, and banded with the most vivid metallic blue and green. The bill is long and curved, and the feet black, and similar to those of the allied forms. The total length of this fine bird is between three and four feet.

This splendid bird inhabits the mountains of New Guinea, in the same district with the "Superb" and the "Six-shafted" Paradise Birds, and I was informed is sometimes found in the ranges near the coast. I was several times assured by different natives that this bird makes its nest in a hole under-ground, or under rocks, always choosing a place with two apertures, so that it may enter at one and go out at the other. This is very unlike what we should suppose to be the habits of the bird, but it is not easy to conceive how the story originated if it is not true; and all travelers know that native accounts of the habits of animals, however strange they may seem, almost invariably turn out to be correct.

The SCALE-BREADED PARADISE BIRD (*Epimachus magnificus* of Cuvier) is now generally placed with the Australian Rifle birds in the genus *Ptiloris*. Though very beautiful, these birds are less strikingly decorated with accessory plumage than the other species we have been describing, their chief ornament being a more or less developed breast-plate of stiff metallic green feathers, and a small tuft of somewhat hairy plumes on the sides of the breast. The back and wings of this species are of an intense velvety black, faintly glossed in certain lights with rich purple. The two broad middle tail feathers are opalescent green-blue with a velvety surface, and the top of the head is covered with feathers resembling scales of burnished steel. A large triangular space covering the chin, throat, and breast is densely scaled with feathers, having a steel-blue or green lustre, and a silky feel. This is edged below with a narrow band of black, followed by shiny bronzy-green, below which the body is covered with hairy feathers of a rich claret color, deepening to black at the tail. The tufts of side plumes somewhat resemble those of the true Birds of Paradise, but are scanty, about as long as the tail, and of a black color. The sides of the head are rich violet, and velvety feathers extend on each side of the beak over the nostrils.

I obtained at Dorey a young male of this bird, in a state of plumage which is no doubt that of the adult female, as is the case in all the allied species. The upper surface, wings, and tail are rich reddish-brown, while the under surface is of a pale ashy color, closely barred throughout with narrow wavy black bands. There is also a pale banded stripe over

the eye, and a long dusky stripe from the gape down each side of the neck. This bird is fourteen inches long, whereas the native skins of the adult male are only about ten inches, owing to the way in which the tail is pushed in, so as to give as much prominence as possible to the ornamental plumage of the breast.

At Cape York, in North Australia, there is a closely allied species, *Ptiloris Alberti*, the female of which is very similar to the young male bird here described. The beautiful Rifle birds of Australia, which much resemble these Paradise Birds, are named *Ptiloris paradiseus* and *Ptiloris Victorice*. The Scale-breasted Paradise Bird seems to be confined to the main land of New Guinea, and is less rare than several of the other species.

There are three other New Guinea birds which are by some authors classed with the Birds of Paradise, and which, being almost equally remarkable for splendid plumage, deserve to be noticed here. The first is the "Paradise Pie" (*Astrapia nigra* of Lesson), a bird of the size of *Paradisea rubra*, but with a very long tail, glossed above with intense violet. The back is bronzy-black, the lower parts green, the throat and neck bordered with loose broad feathers of an intense coppery hue, while on the top of the head and neck they are glittering emerald-green. All the plumage round the head is lengthened and erectile, and when spread out by the living bird must have an effect hardly surpassed by any of the true Paradise Birds. The bill is black and the feet yellow. The *Astrapia* seems to me to be somewhat intermediate between the *Paradiseidae* and *Epimachidae*.

There is an allied species, having a bare ear-runeulated head, which has been called *Paradigalla carunculata*. It is believed to inhabit, with the preceding, the mountainous interior of New Guinea, but is exceedingly rare, the only known specimen being in the Philadelphia Museum.

The PARADISE ORIOLE is another beautiful bird, which is now sometimes classed with the Birds of Paradise. It has been named *Paradisea aurea* and *Oriolus aureus* by the old naturalists, and is now generally placed in the same genus as the Regent Bird of Australia (*Sericulus chryscephalus*). But the form of the bill and the character of the plumage seem to me to be so different that it will have to form a distinct genus. This bird is almost entirely yellow, with the exception of the throat, the tail, and part of the wings and back, which are black; but it is chiefly characterized by a quantity of long feathers of an intense glossy orange color, which cover its neck down to the middle of the back, almost like the hackles of a game-cock.

This beautiful bird inhabits the main land of New Guinea, and is also found in Salwatty, but is so rare that I was only able to obtain one imperfect native skin, and nothing whatever is known of its habits.

I will now give a list of all the Birds of Paradise yet known, with the places they are believed to inhabit.

1. *Paradisea apoda* (The Great Paradise Bird). Aru Islands.
2. *Paradisea papuana* (The Lesser Paradise Bird). New Guinea, Mysol, Jobie.
3. *Paradisea rubra* (The Red Paradise Bird). Waigiou.
4. *Cicinnurus regius* (The King Paradise Bird). New Guinea, Aru Islands, Mysol, Salvatty.
5. *Diphyllodes speciosa* (The Magnificent). New Guinea, Mysol, Salvatty.
6. *Diphyllodes Wilsoni* (The Red Magnificent). Waigiou.
7. *Lophorina atra* (The Superb). New Guinea.
8. *Parotia sexpennis* (The Golden Paradise Bird). New Guinea.
9. *Semioptera Wallacei* (The Standard Wing). Batcian, Gilolo.
10. *Epimachus magnus* (The Long-tailed Paradise Bird). New Guinea.
11. *Seleucides alba* (The Twelve-wired Paradise Bird). New Guinea, Salvatty.
12. *Ptiloris maguifica* (The Scale-breasted Paradise Bird). New Guinea.
13. *Ptiloris Alberti* (Prince Albert's Paradise Bird). North Australia.
14. *Ptiloris paradisea* (The Rifle Bird). East Australia.
15. *Ptiloris Victoriae* (The Victorian Rifle Bird). Northeast Australia.
16. *Astrapia nigra* (The Paradise Pie). New Guinea.
17. *Paradigalla carunculata* (The Carunculated Paradise Pie). New Guinea.
18. (?) *Sericulus aureus* (The Paradise Oriole). New Guinea, Salvatty.

We see, therefore, that of the eighteen species which seem to deserve a place among the Birds of Paradise, eleven are known to inhabit the great island of New Guinea, eight of which are entirely confined to it and the hardly separated island of Salvatty. But if we consider those islands which are now united to New Guinea by a shallow sea to really form a part of it, we shall find that fourteen of the Paradise Birds belong to that country, while three inhabit the northern and eastern parts of Australia, and one the Moluccas. All the more extraordinary and magnificent species are, however, entirely confined to the Papuan region.

Although I devoted so much time to a search after these wonderful birds, I only succeeded myself in obtaining five species during a residence of many months in the Aru Islands, New Guinea, and Waigiou. Mr. Allen's voyage to Mysol did not procure a single additional species, but we both heard of a place called Sorong, on the mainland of New Guinea, near Salvatty, where we were told that all the kinds we desired could be obtained. We therefore determined that he should visit this place, and endeavor to penetrate into the interior among the natives, who actually shoot and skin the Birds of Paradise. He went in the small prau I had fitted up at Goram, and through the kind assistance of the Dutch Resident at Ternate, a lieutenant and two soldiers were sent by the Sultan of Tidore to accompany and protect him, and to assist him in getting men and in visiting the interior.

Notwithstanding these precautions, Mr. Allen met with difficulties in this voyage which we had neither of us encountered before. To understand these it is necessary to consider that the Birds of Paradise are an article of commerce, and are the monopoly of the chiefs of the coast villages, who obtain them at a low rate from the mountaineers and sell them to the Bugis traders. A portion is also paid every year as tribute to the Sultan of Tidore. The natives are therefore very jealous of a stranger, especially a European, interfering in their trade, and above all of going into the interior to deal with the mountaineers themselves. They of course think he will raise the prices in the interior, and lessen the supply on the coast, greatly to their disadvantage; they also think their tribute will be raised if a European takes back a quantity of the rare sorts; and they have besides a vague and very natural dread of some ulterior object in a white man's coming, at so much trouble and expense, to their country only to get Birds of Paradise, of which they know he can buy plenty (of the common yellow ones which alone they value) at Ternate, Macassar, or Singapore.

It thus happened that when Mr. Allen arrived at Sorong, and explained his intention of going to seek Birds of Paradise in the interior, innumerable objections were raised. He was told it was three or four days' journey over swamps and mountains; that the mountaineers were savages and cannibals, who would certainly kill him; and, lastly, that not a man in the village could be found who dare go with him. After some days spent in these discussions, as he still persisted in making the attempt, and showed them his authority from the Sultan of Tidore to go where he pleased and receive every assistance, they at length provided him with a boat to go the first part of the journey up a river; at the same time, however, they sent private orders to the interior villages to refuse to sell any provisions, so as to compel him to return. On arriving at the village where they were to leave the river and strike inland the coast people returned, leaving Mr. Allen to get on as he could. Here he called on the Tidore lieutenant to assist him, and procure men as guides and to carry his baggage to the villages of the mountaineers. This, however, was not so easily done. A quarrel took place, and the natives, refusing to obey the imperious orders of the lieutenant, got out their knives and spears to attack him and his soldiers; and Mr. Allen himself was obliged to interfere to protect those who had come to guard him. The respect due to a white man, and the timely distribution of a few presents, prevailed; and, on showing the knives, hatchets, and beads he was willing to give to those who accompanied him, peace was restored, and the next day, traveling over a frightfully rugged country, they reached the villages of the mountaineers. Here Mr. Allen remained a month without any interpreter through whom he could understand a word or

communicate a want. However, by signs and presents and a pretty liberal barter, he got on very well, some of them accompanying him every day in the forest to shoot, and receiving a small present when he was successful.

In the grand matter of the Paradise Birds, however, little was done. Only one additional species was found, the *Seleucides alba*, of which he had already obtained a specimen in Salwatty; but he learned that the other kinds, of which he showed them drawings, were found two or three days' journey farther in the interior. When I sent my men from Dorey to Amberbaki, they heard exactly the same story—that the rarer sorts were only found several days' journey in the interior, among rugged mountains, and that the skins were prepared by savage tribes who had never even been seen by any of the coast people.

It seems as if Nature had taken precautions that these her choicest treasures should not be made too common, and thus be undervalued. This northern coast of New Guinea is exposed to the full swell of the Pacific Ocean, and is rugged and harborless. The country is all rocky and mountainous, covered every where with dense forests, offering in its swamps and precipices and serrated ridges an almost impassable barrier to the unknown interior; and the people are dangerous savages, in the very lowest stage of barbarism. In such a country, and among such a people, are found these wonderful productions of Nature, the Birds of Paradise, whose exquisite beauty of form and color and strange developments of plumage are calculated to excite the wonder and admiration of the most civilized and the most intellectual of mankind, and to furnish inexhaustible materials for study to the naturalist, and for speculation to the philosopher.

Thus ended my search after these beautiful birds. Five voyages to different parts of the district they inhabit, each occupying in its preparation and execution the larger part of a year, produced me only five species out of the fourteen known to exist in the New Guinea district. The kinds obtained are those that inhabit the coasts of New Guinea and its islands, the remainder seeming to be strictly confined to the central mountain ranges of the northern peninsula; and our researches at Dorey and Amberbaki, near one end of this peninsula, and at Salwatty and Sorong, near the other, enable me to decide with some certainty on the native country of these rare and lovely birds, good specimens of which have never yet been seen in Europe.

A NIGHT AT SEA.

"I UNDERSTAND that it is a common failing of mothers to be jealous of their daughters-in-law," lisped Mr. Sydney Grayson, buttering his remark on one side with a smile and on the other with a bow.

Conscious that he had risen to his full intellectual height to say this, remembering that he

had never before been so original and profound, a sublime tremor of self-respect ran in chills down his back, and the bow which he made was partly to himself.

The moment and the environment called for grandeur of mental action. For the first time in his life he was voyaging beyond sight of land without being too sea-sick to properly appreciate the fact. Under his polished boots was a bark with the Oriental title of *Osmanli*, hailing from New York, or, as Mr. Grayson delighted to call it, "the Metropolis of the Western World," and bound for Smyrna, a city which, as he frequently stated, lay in "the Land of the East, the clime of the Sun." Above him were bellying sails, glorious, unearthly, ghostly in the transforming effulgence of moonlight; and around him was a sparkling expanse which he was graciously pleased to flatter as "the ilimitable ocean."

"I have often noted that peculiarity in mothers," continued Mr. Grayson. "I venture to believe that I can understand Mrs. Gordon's feelings perfectly. She has an only son, and she wants to monopolize him. She is jealous of her son's wife. And I must admit," he smiled and puckered, "that she has a dangerous rival. If I were your respected mother-in-law I should die of despair. Really now, Mrs. Gordon, I think I should."

The person with whom he thus discoursed—like the majority of persons with whom this old beau had spent his life in discoursing—was a young lady. Harriet Gordon, the wife of George Gedney Gordon, always sufficiently pretty, was just now strikingly beautiful. Her complexion dazzled; it did not seem earthly, and, indeed, altogether earthly it was not; something of its purity and glory descended from the heavens; she was transfigured by glamour of moonlight.

"Yes, she has got him," continued Hattie Gordon, failing to notice the compliment of Grayson, and glancing backward at a couple who sat leaning against the taffrail. "She has carried him off; she has got him all to herself; she has cut me out. I presume she is perfectly happy."

"It would be a pity to disturb her innocent pleasure," suggested the veteran beau, who enjoyed walking a moonlit deck with a pretty woman.

"I don't understand it," persisted Hattie. "Why should a mother be jealous of her son's wife? Can't she remember that I belong to him—that I am part of him? It is my place by his side, I suppose. But if she finds us together she fairly glowers."

Here she stopped her tirade and burst into a gay little laugh.

"Very amusing," bowed Syd Grayson. "You put a very absurd and amusing light upon the—the circumstances."

"I was thinking of this," she explained. "Imagine a marriage: somebody steps forward and says, 'I forbid the bans; the gentleman has a mother living!'"

The point was too fine and too tersely put for Grayson to see it; but he bowed, rubbed his hands, and smiled appreciatively, as he had learned to do.

Hattie Gordon now changed the subject, remembering that this talking to strangers about her intimate affairs was one of her habitual faults, and one of the things for which her husband most frequently reproved her. Undoubtedly he was partly to blame for it: he had not sufficient sympathy for her, and did not call out her confidences; moreover, he had allowed his mother to step in between her and himself. But notwithstanding these excuses, she felt that she was wrong in laying open family matters to even so old a gentleman as Mr. Grayson, and she turned the conversation upon other topics.

For Sydney Grayson was not a young gentleman. Even by moonlight you could see that he had been obliging enough to live for fifty years on earth, and that, while performing this good office toward his fellow-creatures, he had not been incessantly respected by the fingers of time. His long, waving hair, originally jet black, was streaked with silver. A small semicircle of white on either cheek stained the unity of his otherwise ebony whiskers and beard. His high, narrow forehead seemed still narrower in consequence of the hollowness of his bare and veined temples; and the lower part of his face, puckered with wrinkles which had once been smiles and dimples, was also narrow, even to weakness. His aquiline nose would have been handsome had it not been ground too fine on the grindstone of years. His mouth was thin-lipped and feeble, and his chin was at once too small and too pointed. His form was that of a tall and slender skeleton, slightly deformed by a stoop in the narrow shoulders, yet not deficient in grace of port and movement. A coffee-colored complexion, which complained of dyspepsia, and still more of malaria, hinted that he was a Southerner; and his elaborate polish of manner and courtliness of voice and affluence of compliment confirmed the flattering suspicion.

The promenade continued. Syd Grayson rehearsed anew that inane, pointless courtship which he had already inflicted upon more than one. Mrs. Gordon slyly and smilingly chaffed him, as he had been chaffed unnumbered times before. He talked, flattered, simpered, and bowed merely to gratify his antiquated vanity. She, even while she laughed at him, was not interested by him; she was thinking of the reserve of her husband and the unfriendliness of his mother. They two made her life thorny—the man not meaning it, the woman intentionally.

At every turn in her walk she glanced uneasily and anxiously at the couple. Why did they sit there, always silent or whispering, like conspirators? Why did they not join her in her promenade, or beckon her to join them in their conference? She would have been glad

to drop the old bean; it would almost have pleased her to see him tumble overboard; she half hated him because he helped to keep her apart from her husband. At the same time she would not go to George until he would signify in some way his desire to have her near him. Long enough had she shivered under indifference; at last it was time to show that she could endure to be left alone. So Hattie Gordon stubbornly remained in that solitude which was implied in a tête-à-tête with grinning, lisping, shallow Syd Grayson.

Let us now glance at the husband and the mother-in-law. They are side by side, upon two camp-stools, leaning against the after-bulwark; they are engaged in monotoned, gestureless, but earnest conversation; the mother's hand rests upon the son's arm. You can see in their faces that life with them has been, and always will be, a painfully serious matter. Neither ever jokes; neither is capable of joking, scarcely of laughing. Not the slightest gleam of humor ever radiates from their souls to lighten the solemnity of events and surroundings. They are the sort of people who can not perceive the fun of an accident or the ludicrousness of a bore. Not that they are melancholic; not that they are shrouded by religious asceticism; but they are gravely and even grimly in earnest. They were born to be Puritans, and they would certainly have fruited into full Puritanism had they been New Englanders instead of Virginians.

"I think I have cause now to hope that my life will not be wholly in vain," George Gordon was saying. "I can not but think that within two years' time I shall be well grounded in both the ancient and modern Greek. I shall set hard to work as soon as we reach Athens. You mustn't expect me to run about the Orient with you. Smyrna we shall see on the way. Then if you want to visit Constantinople you can run up there with Hattie under the care of some of our traveling countrymen. You and Hattie won't mind being left alone a good deal, I hope. I must study with all my might."

"I shall not mind it, for your sake," replied the mother. "As for Hattie, she must learn to bear it. If I can, she can."

There was a slightly unpleasant tone of insinuation in the closing phrase. Satirical it was not; satire was too much like a joke for this woman to be capable of it; her meaning was rather in the nature of a direct scoff. It seemed as if she wished to say, Your wife is not wrapped up in you as I am, and she will easily learn to dispense with your society.

Without noticing the ugly hint, or without caring to remark upon it, George continued to talk of his future.

"I shall be well fitted for my professorship. I shall be the first Professor of the University of Virginia to possess a speaking knowledge of Greek. If I am not unreasonably confident, I shall be valuable to my Alma Mater. That will be the acme of my ambition. If I can

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